

Subject Guide: Policing and Prisons in the Tretter Collection

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Overview

A Brief Overview of Policing and Prisons in Queer History

Police and prisons are a persistent presence in the histories of queer people and the struggle for liberation. The way that police and prisons have shown up in queer history has transformed over time, but one certainty is that same-sex love and gender non-conformity have long been criminalized. While they have both always existed, it was not until the late 19th century that homosexuality emerged as a category of identity. As the category emerged, those labeled homosexual or deviant became objects of scrutiny for the purpose of “reform” or imprisonment. This took various forms across the U.S., Europe, and elsewhere. As long as the modern institutions of the police and psychiatry have existed, queer and trans people have been criminalized, pathologized, and subject to the systematic violence of surveillance, arrest, detention, institutionalization, imprisonment. In the U.S. context, queer people, and especially Black trans women, have long been directly in the sights of the policing apparatus, enforced by cops, doctors, teachers, and parents. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color)

queers—especially Black trans women—have historically faced the most violent and relentless attacks from the police.

Likewise, across time, a core feature of queer struggles for freedom were struggles against criminalization, police surveillance and violence, and imprisonment. For instance, in Weimar Republic Germany of the 1920s, in the 1950s U.S. homophile movement, throughout the 1960s, and beyond, LGBTQ activists fought against state surveillance, the policing of public sex, imprisonment, and police violence. The U.S. queer liberation movement began as a struggle against the police, best remembered in moments of resistance at Cooper Do-nuts in Los Angeles in 1959 (where trans women resisted targeted police arrest)¹; at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966 (where trans women fought the police)²; and at the Stonewall Inn in New York City in 1969 (where queers, led by trans women of color, defended themselves from police violence). In addition to these highly visible moments, queer activist struggles included prisoner support, protesting the criminalization of HIV+ people, and contesting the stigma and racialization of the carceral state.

US laws have long criminalized queerness and gender non-conformity, even into the 21st century. Anti-sodomy laws were not outlawed in the US until 2003³; “and female impersonation” was technically still illegal in many states into the 2010s.⁴ Such laws enabled the state to define and police a racialized cis-heteronormativity, targeting queers as a threat to social order. Another method of arresting and imprisoning queers has been through health code ordinances. Health departments serve many similar functions to the police and have been used to raid and shut down gay spaces such as bathhouses. Raids on bathhouses took place in Minneapolis and across the country and were a targeted form of police harassment. Meanwhile, the discipline of psychology classified homosexuality as a mental disorder until 1987; the World Health Organization until 1992.⁵

Policing, as a force of state violence, has often served the purpose of upholding a racist, heteronormative order. Queerness has disrupted that order at various points in various ways and has therefore been met with police repression.

About this Guide and the Scope of Materials about Policing and Prisons in the Tretter Collection

This guide is intended to offer a starting point for researchers interested in using the Tretter's holdings to investigate criminalization, policing, and imprisonment of LGBTQ people and related

¹ See [Los Angeles' Cooper Donuts gay riots sparked a revolution 10 years before Stonewall](#)

² See [Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria](#)

³ See [The Decriminalization of Sodomy in the United States](#)

⁴ See, e.g., [Arresting dress: A timeline of anti-cross-dressing laws in the United States](#); and [Electric Brilliance: Cross-Dressing Law and Freak Show Displays in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco](#).

⁵ [When Homosexuality Stopped Being a Mental Disorder](#)

topics. The Tretter contains a diversity of materials related to these histories. The guide is divided into 4 sections, organized by type of material:

- [Manuscript Collections](#). Personal papers and organizational records. A great deal of material in this section relates specifically to the history of policing and prisons in the Upper Midwest, and the Twin Cities specifically.
- [Periodicals](#). Newspapers, magazines, and other serial publications that frequently featured materials related to queer and trans people's encounters with policing and prisons.
- [Audio/Video/Image](#). Moving image, still image, and audio recordings of materials.
- [Books](#). Published works.

Researchers may also be interested to know that several themes snake through these materials. These include:

- police raids (including mid-to-late 20th century raids on bathhouses in Minneapolis);
- prisoner support work (including the prisoner support work of ACT UP Minnesota);
- AIDS and HIV criminalization;
- policing of sex workers;
- immigrant detention;
- psychological studies of LGBTQ communities;
- the Nazi persecution of LGBTQ people;
- materials related to the arrest and persecution of CeCe McDonald and the national and Minneapolis-based solidarity campaigns that arose in her defense.

A couple of caveats:

First, the Tretter Collection does not comprehensively document the history of policing and prisons in the queer past, or reflect the breadth of these pasts. For instance, although Black trans women, have often been subject to the greatest threat from police and prisons, their encounters with policing and prisons are not always fully reflected in the Tretter's holdings.

Second, this guide only offers a partial (non-exhaustive) guide to materials contained within Tretter's holdings that do relate to the subjects of policing, prisons, and criminalization. It does not cover the full breadth of this history, nor does it provide a catalog of every relevant item in the Tretter Collection. This is, in part, because the topics of "policing" and "prisons" are extremely broad, encompassing a range of practices and texts developed across many centuries, and including a range of forces that have policed queer and transness – such as medical professionals, psychiatrists, health inspectors, and vigilante violence, among others.

For the purposes of this guide, we have chosen to limit our scope to materials that document, principally, LGBTQ people's encounters with official law enforcement agencies. Although we (such as, including mental hospitals), this guide only includes materials related to prisons, jails,

and detention centers. Even within this limited scope, however, the guide does not exhaustively index the Tretter's holdings; there are more materials in the collection within each of the general subject areas included here.

We have also chosen not to include materials that address non-policing related legal cases (such as the DSI obscenity trial), hospitalization and psychological records (such as the materials in the Karpman collection), or prison-themed erotica. Also while this guide does include a few examples of literary works about policing/prisons, it excludes a long list of other police/prison-related literary materials, including widely available works by famous authors like Jean Genet and Oscar Wilde.

Relevant Tretter Materials, by Type

Manuscript Collections

This section offers documents from the Tretter's manuscript collections. Materials in personal papers and organizational records within the Collection document ACT UP Minnesota's work with HIV+ prisoners, police brutality and raids, and CeCe McDonald support campaign materials, among other topics. Our manuscript materials tend to offer many sources that deal specifically with the Twin Cities.

Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Papers, 1925-2013

The papers of Jean Tretter, the founder of the Tretter Collection, contain material relating to policing and prisons. See for instance:

- Materials held in the folder "AIDS in Prison, undated" (Box: 45). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "Police Treatment of G/L, undated" (Box: 44). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) Records, 1979-2008

The MAP's organizational records document many aspects of this organization's work with the Twin Cities communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Some of these records relate to law enforcement, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Client Services - Police Reports, 1991" (Box: 8). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Robert W. Halfhill Papers, 1956-2001

Halfhill was a longtime Twin Cities activist who was part of a wide range of local organizations including the gay liberation group F.R.E.E., and ACT UP Minnesota. His papers collection is large, and contains documentation of, among other things, ACT UP's work in support of prisoners, especially those living with AIDS. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder “Criminalization of HIV/AIDS, 1992-1995” (Box: 4). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the series “ Prisoner Support Work, 1980-2001” (multiple boxes). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the sub-series “GLBT Subject Files, 1988-2005, undated” (multiple boxes). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Tretter Collection Information Files

This collection subject files includes one sub-series dedicated to HIV/AIDS information and resources and another on bathhouses in the Twin Cities and elsewhere (which were a site of frequent police harassment). See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder “AIDS - Prison Issues” (Box: 26). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the sub-series “Cruising and bathhouses (bathhouse, bath house, gay sauna, gay steambath)” (multiple boxes). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder “Survey of safety needs in the GLBT community, 1992” (Box: 54). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder “Giallombardo, Rose, ‘Social Roles in a Prison for Women’” (Box: 3). [Link](#) to the find aid record.

Allan Spear Papers

[Allan Spear](#) was a historian and a gay Minnesota state legislator. A major focus of his work was racial justice, and he occasionally worked on issues related to prisoners. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in a folder “Correspondence and Organizational Documents, Sandstone Afro-American Organization, 1970-1974” (Box: 7). [Link](#) to the finding aid record, including a digital object.

Karen Joy Clark Papers

Clark was a gay Minnesota state legislator, whose papers document her political work. Materials in her collection that relate to policing and prisons include, e.g.:

- Materials held the folder “‘Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative’ Reports, undated” (Box: 6). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Two-Spirit Papers

Papers consist of general materials around Native American LGBT issues and records of the American Indian Gay and Lesbian Center in Minneapolis. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder “American Indian Gays and Lesbians (AIGL) Correspondence - (from) Inmates, 1991-1992” (Box: 7). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Andrea Jenkins Papers

Jenkins is a poet, and the first Black transgender woman to serve in the Minneapolis City Council. Her collection documents her long involvement in Minneapolis-based arts and politics. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Civilian Police Review Authority Annual Report and Correspondence , 2006 - 2009" (Box: 2). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Support CeCe McDonald Poster (Box: 4). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

D. Scott Dibble Papers

Dibble is a gay rights activist, among other issues, and Minnesota senator. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Police and Civilian Review, 1990" (Box: 4). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Dallas Drake Papers, 1950-2003

Drake was involved in ACT UP Minnesota. His collection includes news clippings on issues affecting the LGBT community. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Police Brutality Clippings, 1991" (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Golden Commune Records, 1970-1987

This collection contains publications and organizational documents from the Golden Commune, a gay and lesbian land project in Oregon, including documentation of a police raid on the commune:

- Materials held in the folder "Notebook - Golden Meeting Minutes, 1981" (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Harold Wells Papers, 1957-2002

Papers contain Wells' personal collection of articles, clippings, and publications of various LGBT organizations around the country. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Minneapolis Police, 1988-1997" (Box: 4). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Ken Moses Papers, 1950-2015

Moses collected LGBT-related news from around the US and world, with a concentration on the Twin Cities. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the file "BADCOP.TXT: Biased or misbehaving policemen or police departments, 1998-2014". [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Mark Kasel Papers, 1981-2000

Papers consist of various sources of information relating to the LGBT community, especially around political and social issues. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Civilian Police Review, 1994" (Box: 3). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Michael McConnell Files

McConnell and his husband Jack Baker are gay activists in Minneapolis. The collection includes materials related to the gay liberation movement in the 60s and 70s. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Minneapolis Police vs. Gays - Controversy, 1977-1979" (Box: 10). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- "What in the World Is Going On Between Mattachine and the Police?" Flyer, 1973 (Box: 2). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "Correspondence -- Seeking Help: Miscellaneous, Priests, Ministers, and Prisoners, 1969-1977" (Box: 30). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Minnesota Civil Liberties Union Records, 1965-2006

Records are composed of various documents pertaining to organization, with attention to coverage of the LGBT community in Minnesota. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Bathhouse / bookstore raids - Press, 1979-1981" (Box: 6). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "MCGLR & Target City Coalition literature & Vice Squad raid accounts, 1979" (Box: 6). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "Sodomy research, data, & MPD/SPPD arrest records, 1985 - 1986" (Box: 5). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

OutFront Minnesota Records

OutFront began as the Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council (GLCAC) in 1987 conducting public policy lobbying, and later focused on legal and political issues. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Media on Community Interactions with Police, 2007-2008" (Box: 72). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "Materials related to CeCe McDonald Arrest, Prosecution, and Release" (Box: 72). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Patrick Melroy Collection

Collection contains a large selection of gay themed buttons as well as documentation concerning homosexual struggles in Iowa. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Midwest Men's Festival Raid, 1990" (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Patrick's Cabaret Records

Patrick's Cabaret was a queer-led performance arts incubator in the Twin Cities. The organization promoted marginalized voices and community change. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Police Department Expansion Survey, 1998 - 2003" (Box: 2). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Billy Navarro Jr. Records

Navarro Jr. is an activist who worked on the campaign to support CeCe McDonald, among other causes. The collection is entirely composed of materials on the Free CeCe campaign. [Link](#) to the finding aid records.

Ethan O'Brien Papers

O'Brien is a community organizer in Minneapolis. The collection contains documents reflecting his activism. See, e.g.:

- "Free CeCe" Poster, undated (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- "Support CeCe McDonald" Poster, undated (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Materials relating to LGBTIQ and Women's Rights Organizations in Sri Lanka (1999-2006)

This collection contains materials related to the struggle for LGBT rights in Sri Lanka, including documents of the Women's Support Network. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Women's Support Group Commercial Sex Workers Project, 2001-2003" (Box: 1). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Colin de la Motte-Sherman Papers

The papers cover human rights efforts across Europe, especially concerning LGBT issues in Germany, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. See, e.g.:

- Materials held in the folder "Nazi persecution and post-World War II Germany, 2016, n.d." (Box: 2). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Materials held in the folder "Persecution of LGBT people in Nazi Germany, 2000-2003" (Box: 2). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Periodicals

This section includes relevant newslippings and publications containing material related to policing and prisons, including support work for prisoners with AIDS, women prisoners, and sex workers.

Clippings

Smith, Cathy. "Demands for Police Inquiry Increase: Harassment and Brutality of Gays Revealed at Police Assault Trial." Clip from the *Toronto Clarion*, 10 July 1981. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Magazines.

People with AIDS Coalition of New York, *Newsline*, 1994. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

\$pread Magazine. 2007-2011. A magazine by, for, and about sex workers and their supporters. It contained personal experiences and political insights and offered news, features, health columns, and related resources. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Zines and Broadsides

Belli Research Institute, *Against Stigma, Not Sex Work*. 2017. This zine unpacks the concept of stigma and its relation to the policing and endangerment of sex workers. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Henry, Imani. *The Case of the Jersey 4*. 2007. Article on the case of four Black lesbians who defended themselves from a man assaulting them in the West Village in New York City. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Law, Vikki, and Barilee Banister, editors. *Tenacious: Writings from Women in Prison*. Black Star Publishers, 2002. Female inmates in correctional facilities across the United States contribute articles, poetry, and art to this zine devoted to the injustices of the prison system specific to women. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

REB, *Fanorama*. 1995-2001. This zine emerged from the Rhode Island queercore movement, publishing gay porn, anti-assimilationist political views, prisoners' letters, and in the later years writings from prisoners. [Link](#) to the record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Audio, Video, and Posters

This section contains audio tapes, videos, and posters that document police surveillance and harassment, sexuality in prison, Nazi persecution of homosexuals, and queer immigrant struggles.

David Thorstad Cassette Tapes

Collection contains digitized tapes of interviews, NAMBLA conferences, and gay liberation/socialist topics. See, e.g.:

- NY NAMBLA News Conference tape 1-2 side A-B, 28-Dec-82 [NAMBLA news conference exposing FBI and police hunt surrounding the disappearance of Etan Patz]. [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Tretter Audio and Video Inventory

Inventory contains audio and visual materials from across multiple collections. See, e.g.:

- "40th Anniversary of Stonewall," June 2009 (Box: 238). [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- "Lilies," 1996 (Box: 225) [Based on the play by Michel-Marc Bouchard; depicts a play being performed in a prison by the inmates coming to terms with their homosexuality]. [Link](#) to the finding aid record.
- Paragraph 175, 2000 (Box: 225) [Historian Klaus Müller interviews survivors of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals about the German Penal Code of 1871, Paragraph 175]. [Link](#) to the finding aid record.

Julio Salgado posters

Salgado is an undocumented, queer activist whose visual art depicts moments of the DREAM Act and the migrant rights movement. [Link](#) to all Salgado posters at Tretter. [Link](#) to all of his artwork. See, e.g.:

- “Arrest ICE.” [Link](#) to the artwork’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog. [Link](#) to an image of the artwork.
- “I will not show you my papers.” [Link](#) to the artwork’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog. [Link](#) to an image of the artwork.

Tretter Transgender Oral History Project

Books

This section is divided into six subsections: AIDS and Prisoners, Gender and Sexuality in Prison, Police Brutality, Queer Immigration, Prison Literature, and Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals. The types of books here range from first hand accounts to art exhibition companions to pathologizing studies.

AIDS and Prisoners

Croft, Kyle, and Asher Mones. *Cell Count*. Visual AIDS, 2018. This book accompanied an exhibition. It contains visual art and essays related to HIV criminalization. [Link](#) to the book’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Fleury-Steiner, Benjamin, and Carla Crowder. *Dying Inside: The HIV/AIDS Ward at Limestone Prison*. University of Michigan Press, 2008. An investigation into the nightmarish conditions of the segregated HIV ward at Limestone Prison, highlighting problems of imprisonment and mistreatment of HIV-positive prisoners. [Link](#) to the book’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Gender and Sexuality in Prison

Fishman, Joseph F. *Sex in Prison: Revealing Sex Conditions in American Prisons*. National Library Press, 1934. [Link](#) to the book’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Frank, Richard, and Stanley Weber. *A Study of Sex in Prison*. Gallery Press, 1963. [Link](#) to the book’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Kunzel, Regina G. *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*. University of Chicago Press, 2008. An argument for the importance of the prison in the history of sexuality and the central place of prison in ideas of sex and sexuality. [Link](#) to the book’s record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

New York Department of Mental Hygiene. *Report on Study of 102 Sex Offenders at Sing Sing Prison*. 1950. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Stanley, Eric A., and Nat Smith. *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. AK Press, 2015. Bringing together writing from prisoners, activists, and academics, the book makes the case that trans/queer liberations and prison abolition must grow together. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Queers United in Support of Political Prisoners. *Dykes and Fags Want to Know: A Written Interview with Lesbian Political Prisoners Laura Whitehorn, Linda Evans and Susan Rosenberg*. Arm The Spirit, 1995. An interview with three lesbian political prisoners who discuss their support of anti-imperialist, armed liberation movements and struggles against racism, sexism, and heterosexism, including an account of prison love affairs around AIDS. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Wooden, Wayne S., and Jay Parker. *Men behind Bars: Sexual Exploitation in Prison*. Da Capo Press, 1983. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Police Brutality

Amnesty International USA. *Stonewalled: Police Abuse and Misconduct against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the U.S.* Amnesty International USA, 2005. This book is a documentation of police abuse and misconduct against LGBT people in the U.S. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

O'Kash, Alex. *Stop in the Name of the Law*. Savage Press, 1994. Account from a Superior, Wisconsin cop, including a history of the North End Red Light District. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Rechy, John. *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary*. Grove Press, 1977. A nonfiction account of the oppression of homosexuals specifically in 1970s Los Angeles. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

World View Publishers, *In the Spirit of Stonewall*. 1979. A compilation of articles on queer issues that first appeared in the Workers world newspaper. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Queer Immigration

Hart, John. *Stories of Gay and Lesbian Immigration: Together Forever?* Harrington Park Press, 2002. This book looks at immigration to Australia and the social and legal hurdles

that queer immigrants face. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Rainbow Pilgrims: The Rites and Passages of LGBTQI Migrants in Britain. Liberal Judaism, 2018. This book contains portions of a larger online project that documents the hidden histories of LGBTQI migrants in the U.K. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Prison Literature

Buck, et al. *Conspiracy of Voices: Poetry, Writings and Art by the Women of the Resistance Conspiracy Case*. Emergency Committee to Defend the Human and Legal Rights of Political Prisoners, 1990. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Lopez, Erika. *They Call Me Mad Dog!: A Story for Bitter, Lonely People*. Simon & Schuster Editions, 1998. This story follows the main character who's accused of killing her unfaithful lover. Part story and part illustration, the book deals with queerness and women's prison with humor and sobriety. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Puig, Manuel. *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. Vintage Books, 1991. Set in an Argentine prison, the novel is about two men who share stories of love and victimization. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Nazi Persecution of "Homosexuals"

Heger, Heinz. *The Men with the Pink Triangle*. Alyson Publications, 1980. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Lenz, Reimar, and Michael A. Lombardi-Nash. *The Wholesale Murder of Homosexuals in the Third Reich*. Urania Manuscripts, 1979. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Plant, Richard. *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals*. H. Holt, 1988. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Seel, Pierre. *I, Pierre Seel, Deported Homosexual: A Memoir of Nazi Terror*. Basic Books, 1995. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.

Young, Ian. *Gay Resistance: Homosexuals in the Anti-Nazi Underground*. Stubblejumper Press, 1985. [Link](#) to the book's record in the University of Minnesota Libraries catalog.